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ABSTRACT

This report on vocational education and training (VET) in Hungary consists of a condensed description of the present situation in VET and analysis of the main challenges facing VET reform in the country. Chapter 1 offers basic data on Hungary. Chapter 2 describes main features of the VET system, strategic objectives for VET, and legislative framework. Developments in these specific areas are highlighted: administrative structure and decentralization; finance; adaptation of training to change; identification of skill needs; quality standards and qualifications; promotion of continuing vocational training; social partners; involvement of enterprises in VET; equal opportunities; access to training; and vocational guidance and counseling. Chapter 3 provides an overview of international assistance, including the European Union's Phare program for VET and the Leonardo program. Chapter 4 identifies current challenges in three areas: skill needs analysis, institutional arrangements, and qualifications and training methods. Chapter 5 outlines possible priorities for future assistance to sustain and further the reform process. Appendixes include key indicators (access and participation, finance, labor market trends); diagram of VET system; legislative framework; responsible bodies; and international assistance sources. (YLB)

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European Training Foundation

Vocational Education and Training Reform in

HUNGARY

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The European Training Foundation is an agency of the European Community which works in the field of vocational education and training in Central and Eastern Europe, the New Independent States and Mongolia. The Foundation also provides technical assistance to the European Commission for the Tempus Programme.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

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FOREWORD

This report on vocational education and training reform has been produced by the European Training Foundation based mainly on information provided by the National Observatory. The report consists of a condensed description of the present situation in vocational education and training and analysis of the main challenges facing vocational education and training reform in the country. It also outlines possible priorities for future assistance to sustain and further the reform process. The report will be updated in 1998.

In order to provide accurate, up to date information on the progress of reform, a network of National Observatories has been set up by the Foundation in partnership with the national authorities of the partner countries. These National Observatories, mainly hosted by existing organisations involved in the reform process, gather and analyse information on vocational education and training issues according to a common framework agreed with the Foundation. The Observatories are also responsible for the dissemination of their outputs. Since 1996, National Observatories have been set up in 22 partner countries eligible for support under the EU Phare[1] and Tacis[2] Programmes. The Foundation aims to set up Observatories in all remaining partner countries in these regions by the end of 1997.

This report is one of a series of country reports and factsheets which the Foundation is currently producing on the reform process in each of the partner countries. The Foundation intends to produce these documents on an annual basis. These reports are available from the Foundation and can also be consulted on the Foundation's Home Page on the WWW. Enquiries regarding the reports should be addressed to the Information & Publications Department at the Foundation.

Please note that more detailed information on vocational education and training reform issues in each country is also available directly from the respective National Observatory. Please refer to the list of National Observatories enclosed in this report.

Torino, October 1997

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1 In the Phare area, Observatories have been set up in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

2 In the Tacis area, Observatories have been set up in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russian Federation (Moscow and St Petersburg) Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

CONTENT

1. BASIC DATA 4

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM 6

2.1 Main features of system 6
2.2 Strategic objectives for vocational education and training 7
2.3 Legislative Framework 8
2.4 Developments in specific areas 8

2.4.1 Administrative structure and decentralisation 8
2.4.2 Finance 8
2.4.3 Adaptation of training to change 9
2.4.4 Identification of skills needs 10
2.4.5 Quality standards and qualifications 11
2.4.6 Promotion of continuing vocational training 11
2.4.7 Social Partners 12
2.4.8 Involvement of enterprises in vocational education and training 13
2.4.9 Equal opportunities 13
2.4.10 Access to training 14
2.4.11 Vocational guidance and counselling 14

3. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION 15

3.1 Phare Assistance in the field of vocational education and training 15
3.2 Preparation for Leonardo 15
3.3 Other assistance 16

4. CHALLENGES AND FURTHER NEEDS 17

4.1 Skills needs analysis 17
4.2 Institutional arrangements 18
4.3 Qualifications and training methods 18

5. POSSIBLE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE 20

ANNEX 1: Key Indicators 22
ANNEX 2: Diagram of the vocational education and training system 23
ANNEX 3: Legislative Framework 24
ANNEX 4: Responsible bodies 25
ANNEX 5: International Assistance 28

1. BASIC DATA

Considerable progress has been made in laying the foundations for a well functioning market economy and today Hungary is considered one of the more advanced transition economies. Current government priorities include the consolidation of reforms, stabilisation of the economy, and integration into the European Union. In 1993, Hungary signed the European Association Agreement, and in 1994 it applied for membership to the European Union. Moreover, Hungary will participate in a number of EU programmes i.e. Leonardo, Socrates and Youth for Europe.

Geographic area:	93,033 km²
Total population / population density / growth:	10.2 million (1995) / 110 km² / decline -0.03%
Urban Population:	62.6% (1995)
Age structure:	0-14: 18.3% / 15-24: 15.8% / 25-44: 28.1% / 45-64: 23.8% / 65-max: 14% (1995)
Ethnic profile:	Hungarian: 97.8% / other: 2.2%
Languages:	Hungarian (official)
GDP-ECU/GDP per capita-PPP-ECU/ growth:	33.42 Billion (1995) / per capita 3,343 (1995) / growth 1% (1996)
Inflation:	23.6% (1996)
Privatisation of state enterprises:	From a total of 1,857 state enterprises in 1990, only 282 remained by the end of 1996
Unemployment: **(ILO definition)**	9.2% (1996) / under 25's 15.7% (1996) / 25's and over 8%
Education budget:	7.8% of GDP in 1996

2. Recent developments in the vocational education and training system

2.1 Main features of system

At present (academic year 1996/97), vocational education and training can start at the age of 14 (i.e. before the end of compulsory education at the age of 16). Training is provided in:

- **secondary vocational schools** which, over a period of four years, prepare students for the final secondary examination (érettségi) and a skilled workers qualification;
- apprenticeship schools which, over a three-year period, prepare students for a skilled workers qualification and
- **vocational schools** which, over a period of two years, prepare students for a vocational school certificate.

Furthermore, secondary vocational school graduates can upgrade their qualification level through one or two-year post-secondary vocational training courses (provided in secondary vocational schools) leading to a technician level qualification.

Participation in vocational education and training at secondary level is quite high by European standards, involving 72.8% of all young people enrolled at this level. This percentage has remained stable since 1989. Nevertheless, the fact that more young people are enrolling at secondary vocational schools should be noted. Enrolment rates at this type of school increased from 27% in 1989 to 33% in 1995, while they slid from 42.7% to 35.7% at apprenticeship schools during the same period.

The drop-out rate is quite high at apprenticeship schools it is twice the rate of gymnasiums (general secondary education) and secondary vocational schools. Estimates show that for those who started secondary education and training in the 1992/93 academic year, the drop-out rate at apprenticeship schools was 20%, while at gymnasiums and secondary vocational schools it was 8.5% and 10.8% respectively.

As to the management of the vocational education and training system, the following characteristics should be noted:

- a high degree of decentralisation of managerial responsibilities to local governments, schools and other local bodies;
- a legislative and institutional framework which involves a large number of actors (including social partners, local authorities, sectoral ministries) in the decision making processes, in particular in the identification of qualifications and qualification requirements, and the development of curricula and examinations. Nevertheless, ultimate decisions on vocational training policy are taken by the Ministry of Labour and, where appropriate, by the Ministry of Education.

- a financing system which is mainly based on allocations from the central budget and, to a lesser extent, on compulsory enterprise contributions for training, local government budgets and other sources.

2.2 Strategic objectives for vocational education and training

According to the Government's "Comprehensive Programme for Social and Economic Transformation", adopted by the Parliament in November 1995, the development of human resources is considered of primary importance for the future of the country as a means to social cohesion and economic growth.

The improvement of the qualification levels of young people is one of the main education policy objectives. To that end, the government ensures free education to érettségi level and free vocational training for the first qualification for all. Particular importance, through positive discrimination actions, is attributed to ethnic and national minorities.

Furthermore, the government's target is to increase the percentage of those passing the érettségi examination to 75-80% of a school intake, and of those achieving a higher education diploma to 33%. For the achievement of the latter, particular reference is made to the reform of post-secondary vocational training through the development of vocational education programmes relevant to the labour market.

At the same time, the guarantee of quality in education and training is being sought through the continuous modernisation of content, methodology, and teacher training.

In the context of Hungary's accession to the European Union, the government's objective is to adapt vocational qualification requirements to achieve European recognition.

The specific objectives for vocational education and training are stated in the "Long-term Development Programme for Vocational Training", approved by a government resolution in 1996.

These include:

- increasing the number of those obtaining a vocational qualification; everyone should have the chance to obtain an appropriate vocational qualification to increase his/her opportunities in the labour market;
- developing and maintaining the international competitiveness of professional skills. This will involve tracing and predicting the needs of the economy and its modernisation;
- enhancing the role of the business sector in the teaching of basic vocational knowledge in schools and practical training;
- cost-efficiency;
- implementation of a permanent system for continuing vocational training both for the unemployed and the employed;

- harmonisation of statistical information systems with European and international norms.

2.3 Legislative Framework

Legislation on the principles and functioning of the vocational education and training system was developed during the first half of the 90's. One of the main legislative acts, Law LXXVI/93 on Vocational Training (and its amendment in 1995), provides measures for ensuring output control of vocational training through standard based vocational qualifications. The last ministerial decrees on the implementation and execution of this law were made at the end of 1996. Furthermore another law, Law XXIII/88 on the Vocational Training Fund and its Amendments (the most recent in Dec. 1996), defines the funding of practical training (see Annex 3).

The legislative framework for continuing vocational training is provided by Law IV/1991 on Employment Promotion and the Unemployed, and its amendments (the most recent in January 1997), and by ministerial decrees for the execution of this law.

2.4 Developments in specific areas

2.4.1 Administrative structure and decentralisation

Overall responsibility for vocational education and training lies with the Ministry of Labour, while the Ministry of Education is responsible for the teaching and supervision of general subjects and has an increasing role in the area of post-secondary vocational training. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (through county and local authorities) is responsible for state financial support of school-based vocational training. Sectoral ministries have responsibilities in the identification of qualifications and the content of curricula for the professions falling under their competence.

The decentralisation process started at the beginning of the 80's and has led to a high degree of distribution in managerial responsibilities for vocational training. Local governments (mainly municipalities and occasionally counties) have been given a major role in the administration of the education and vocational education and training systems. They are the owners of state schools and are responsible for maintaining, operating and developing the apprenticeship schools. They make decisions regarding the modernisation, restructuring, financing, merging, closing down and founding of schools. They employ the school headmasters, approve curricula and pedagogical programmes, and evaluate efficiency.

Furthermore, schools themselves can decide on the training courses they offer, draw-up their own training programmes/curricula and define pedagogical methods. They have full responsibility for their own management, including management of their budget.

2.4.2 Finance

The main sources of financing vocational training are the state budget and compulsory employers contributions for training (1.5% of their wage bill).

School revenue comes from the following specific sources:

- local government contributions (35-40%)
- state budget contribution to local governments (school maintainers)
- (30-40%)
- compulsory employers contributions for training (15-20%)
- schools' own sources (4-10%)
- other sources (foundations, etc.) (0-10%)

In order to support the provision of practical training, the government established the **Vocational Training Fund** (in 1992). Its sources are the compulsory employers contributions, money from the privatisation of state companies and the central budget. The Fund's budget is divided into a central part to be used at national level (10% of the total budget) and a decentralised part for use in particular counties (90% of the total budget).

Decisions on the level and distribution of the central part of the budget to different activities are taken by the Ministry of Labour on recommendations from the National Vocational Training Council (where employers, trade unions, Chambers of Economy, local governments and ministries responsible for vocational training are represented). Decisions on the distribution of the decentralised part are made by the County Labour Centres on recommendations from the County Labour Councils (tripartite bodies). All funds are spent through a tendering procedure in which all training providers (schools, regional training centres, public and private training enterprises) can participate.

2.4.3 Adaptation of training to change

Since the beginning of the socio-economic transformation process, the overall strategy for vocational education and training has been to broaden the skills and knowledge provided to young people.

One of the most important steps in this direction has been to change the profile of the secondary vocational school (supported by a World Bank loan and thus called the "World Bank model"). The secondary vocational school will provide vocational preparation for 13 occupational families, rather than vocational qualifications for specific occupations (as was traditionally the case). The 13 occupational families have already been identified and curricula for all of them have been developed and implemented in 158 schools (with the support of the World Bank and the EU Phare Programme). From September '97 onwards, all secondary vocational schools will adopt this profile and implement these curricula. Furthermore, it has been decided to postpone entry into vocational training from the age of 14 to the age of 16, to coincide with the end of compulsory schooling. Until that age, students will receive general education along the lines of the National Core Curriculum.

At the same time, action has been undertaken to update and adapt professional requirements, and the resulting standard curricula, for qualifications included in the National Vocational Qualifications Register. The National Vocational Training Institute, on behalf of the sectoral ministries and in co-operation with the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Germany), has already started (1994) to define new professional requirements and standard curricula for 300 (out of approximately 900 included in the Register) occupations. This should be completed by mid-1997.

In response to the higher level skills increasingly required by the labour market, the opportunities for acquiring corresponding qualifications will be improved. This will be achieved by developing post-secondary vocational training[3].

To this end the so called "Accredited Higher Vocational Training" will be developed. This type of vocational training will provide both a vocational qualification (at technician level) and the possibility to transfer to relevant university courses. These courses will acknowledge (accredit) the knowledge acquired in the post-secondary vocational course. The course will last at least 2 years. The necessary legislation for the implementation of this type of training has already been passed. At present schools, universities and colleges are working together to identify and prepare relevant training programmes.

In the area of continuing vocational training, training will be adapted to industrial and technological change by providing relevant training to the unemployed, or employed at risk of unemployment due to industrial restructuring.

Specific actions include:

- legislative provisions on the right to training and the modalities of its delivery;
- financial support for the organisation of the training programmes;
- the establishment of training centres for the flexible provision of training (see part 2.4.6).

It should also be noted that special support (in particular financial support) has been made available for training people in geographical areas which have disproportionately suffered under economic restructuring (e.g. the north-east of the country). Nevertheless, persistent high unemployment rates cast doubt on the success of this policy.

2.4.4 Identification of skills needs

In Hungary at present, there is no formal mechanism for a systematic and comprehensive analysis of skills shortages (i.e. what type of skills are needed in the work place).

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[3] It should be noted that the development of post-secondary vocational training has a second objective which is the provision of an alternative to long academic studies which many young people start but do not manage to finish.

At national level, the National Labour Methodology Centre analyses and reports on labour market developments. Nevertheless, there is no feedback mechanism to communicate the results of these analyses to vocational training decision makers.

At regional level, skills shortages are identified ad hoc. Occasionally, enterprises express their skills requirements directly to schools and regional training centres for the development of appropriate training programmes. County Labour Centres often provide information and advise schools on the qualifications required within the geographical area they cover.

At sectoral level, identification of skills shortages is, to a certain extent, ensured by defining professional requirements for occupations in a given economic sector (i.e. the procedure for updating the National Vocational Qualifications Register).

2.4.5 Quality standards and qualifications

A high degree of managerial decentralisation and the implementation of the output control approach for vocational training require appropriate instruments which set standards and ensure the quality of training.

At national level these are :

- the National Vocational Qualifications Register. It lists all the formally recognised qualifications for which young people can undergo training;
- professional requirements for each qualification included in the National Vocational Qualifications Register set qualification standards;
- standard curricula. They are developed on the basis of the above mentioned professional requirements recommended to schools as a basis for the development of their own programmes adapted to local needs;
- examination requirements, identified for each qualification included in the National Vocational Qualifications Register, and the national system of examinations, which ensure nation wide recognised certification.

That these instruments already exist is an important step towards transparency and quality assurance in training. These standards should be regularly evaluated and updated. In this evaluation and updating, the Ministry of Labour has often stressed the need to take developments in the EU Member States into account, with the aim of ensuring the transparency of qualifications in preparation for future entry into the Union.

2.4.6 Promotion of continuing vocational training

Since the beginning of the transformation process, the government has attributed particular importance to the promotion of continuing vocational training. Nevertheless, as a result of the special circumstances in Hungary, it has mostly focused on the re-training of the unemployed, or people at risk of unemployment due to industrial change. Government actions have dealt particularly with the development of legislation to support the training of the unemployed.

At the same time, efforts have been made to ensure a flexible supply of vocational training responding to regional skills shortages. For this purpose nine Regional Labour Development and Training Centres have been established since 1992 (with the assistance of the World Bank). Each Centre aims to cover a specific geographical area (one or more counties).

These Centres provide training courses for the unemployed (including young unemployed) and/or employed at the request of the Regional Labour Centres or local enterprises. The courses either provide full training leading to a qualification from the National Vocational Qualifications Register or short courses providing specific supplementary skills (e.g. computing, foreign languages, setting up small businesses, etc.).

The courses are structured in training modules and their contents is defined by the Centres in co-operation with the local authorities and local enterprises. In total, the Centres have 3,000 places. If more places are needed, they can be rented from vocational schools.

Continuing vocational training can also be provided by apprenticeship schools, and other public, or private, training organisations and enterprises.

In 1995, 72,000 people participated in continuing training courses. (76% of the 1994 figure. This reduction is mainly due to budget constraints). A total of 4,057 people already in employment were trained for new job opportunities or skills upgrading. 62 % of those trained during the same year were under 30 and 45%, under 25. The number of trainees under 25 has declined in recent years.

2.4.7 Social Partners

According to legislation, social partners have an advisory role in the development of vocational training policies and in the distribution of funds for practical training.

An attempt to involve social partners in the decision making process was made in 1991 with the establishment of the National Training Council (see Annex 4). The actual role of this Council is weak and its future uncertain.

At the moment, the participation of social partners in decision making for vocational training is ensured through their representation on the **National Vocational Training Council**. This is a newly established (October 1995) consultative body to the Minister of Labour and deals with a broad number of issues (see annex 4).

The Chambers of Economy (Commerce and Industry, Agriculture and Crafts) have the responsibility for practical training and final examinations (see Annex 4). Nevertheless, until now, these Chambers are not fully operational due to their weak infrastructure and many of these responsibilities are still carried out by the Ministry of Labour.

The social partners have also a significant role in the process of updating the National Vocational Qualifications Register, the identification of professional requirements and examinations and they make recommendations for standard curricula for different training courses. These are worked out in co-operation with representatives of the pertinent trade union representatives, chambers of commerce, employers organisations and relevant ministries.

At local level, social partners participate in the decision making process for vocational training, and the distribution of the budget of the Vocational Training Fund, through their representation on the County Labour Councils.

2.4.8 Involvement of enterprises in vocational education and training

Traditionally, in Hungary, enterprises have played an important role in the provision of practical training (for both young people and employees). Problems emerged after 1992 with the privatisation process and the loss of important markets which reduced their capability and willingness to provide training. Despite the efforts of the government to encourage enterprises (mainly through tax incentives) to continue providing practical training, its current level is not adequate to cover the needs of the vocational training system.

In order to ensure adequate funds for vocational training the government has passed legislation on the compulsory enterprise contribution. This contribution can be made in one of the following ways (percentages in brackets show how much of the contributions were made in which way in 1995):

- financing the organisation of courses for their own employees (42.7%);
- providing financial assistance directly to training institutions (vocational schools, regional training centres, other training providers) (37.3%) and
- contributing to the Vocational Training Fund (19.9%).

The relationship between enterprises and training providers (schools and regional labour development and training centres is in most cases informal. It usually takes the form of bilateral negotiations at which financial support from enterprises is exchanged for the opportunity to give recommendations on the content of training.

2.4.9 Equal opportunities

No significant differences are noted in the achievements of boys and girls within the education system. However, statistics show that there are differences in the type of education they follow. Girls prefer to follow studies leading to the érettségi which also grants access to higher education, while boys tend to opt for vocational qualifications. The proportion of girls to boys in the gymnasium (secondary general education) is 2:1. This proportion is reversed for the apprenticeship school, while the ratio is 1:1 for the secondary vocational school.

2.4.10 Access to training

Ensuring training for everyone is a main government priority and one of its current policy objectives.

In addition to the mainstream training provision, the state also supports special training for disadvantaged groups. There are special schools for training mentally and physically challenged young people and special training opportunities (basic vocational training, follow up courses) for children with high learning difficulties. Furthermore, a number of bilateral programmes (with Denmark, Germany, Italy) have been launched to develop training methods for socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities.

2.4.11 Vocational guidance and counselling

So called guidance teachers provide vocational guidance and counselling for students within the school system. Furthermore, software packages for computer interactive vocational counselling are available at almost all secondary vocational schools. Labour offices undertook the responsibility of providing guidance to the unemployed, but their staff is not sufficiently qualified, nor is their infrastructure adequate.

Recently three Occupational Information Advisories, founded with German assistance and functioning along the lines of the Berufsinformationszentren (BIZ) in Germany, have been established to provide vocational guidance and counselling to both young people and adults. The demand to set up a network for career guidance is very high at the moment and it is considered one of the more urgent tasks.

3. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION

3.1 Phare Assistance in the field of vocational education and training

Hungary, together with Poland, was the first country to receive assistance in the field of vocational education and training through the Phare Programme (including the Tempus Programme for higher education). Phare has been a major financial contributor to vocational training reform.

Phare assistance in this field focused on:

- study visits abroad for vocational teachers;
- the restructuring of apprenticeships;
- the promotion of active employment measures;
- the improvement of adult training standards;
- the training of disadvantaged youth;
- curricula reform in 21 secondary vocational schools;
- the development of post-secondary vocational education and training;
- the development of vocational training (equivalence of qualifications, new curricula, trainer training) in specific economic sectors, and the training of employees in these sectors.

For a description of Phare activities in vocational education and training see Annex 5).

3.2 Preparation for Leonardo

Leonardo opened in Hungary on 1 February 1996.

The Hungarian National Coordination Unit (NCU) was established (Nov. '96) within the National Institute for Vocational Education (NIVE). Austria was selected as the tutor country.

A total of 24 Hungarian institutions participated in Leonardo projects promoted and coordinated by an EU Member State. In the 1997 call for proposals there were some 20 applications from Hungary.

As school budgets cannot cover the necessary contribution for participation, the government provides the additional financial support required from the budget of the Vocational Training Fund. In total 85 million HUF are available.

3.3 Other assistance

The biggest contributor of international assistance is the World Bank. Hungary and the World Bank agreed on a "Human Resource Development" loan for the period 1991 to 94. This loan included resources for both youth and adult training. By supporting youth training, the World Bank helped to develop a new model for the secondary vocational school, and to define 13 occupational areas. The loan also supported higher education and training in foreign languages. With regard to continuing training, the World Bank helped to establish and equip nine re-training centres, develop curricula and training methods, and offer guidance for individual career changes.

Hungary and EU Member States, the USA and Canada work together in a number of bilateral activities concerning different aspects of vocational training (for details see Annex 5).

4. CHALLENGES AND FURTHER NEEDS

Hungary has been successful in drawing up a coherent policy for adapting the vocational education and training system to the needs of the new socio-economic environment. It has also been successful in setting up a legislative, institutional and financial framework within which this policy can be promoted.

At this stage it is important to speed up and ensure the successful implementation of reforms while (re)considering and promoting more concrete policy options to take the requirements for accession to the European Union into account, mainly in the areas of

* continuing vocational training and
* vocational guidance and counselling.

4.1 Skills needs analysis

Since the beginning of the transformation process adapting training programmes to the skills shortages of the economy has been a major objective. However, the mechanisms for identifying these shortages, and their translation into appropriate decisions for vocational education and training, are still in an initial phase. In the future, more emphasis should be put on the development of a formal mechanism to:

* undertake more detailed labour market analyses and assessment (in terms of the relevant parameters for vocational education and training) both at regional and national levels, and
* disseminate the results to training decision makers (including central decision makers, local governments, schools, other training providers, and people who receive training).

Schools and local enterprises should cooperate more closely to identify appropriate subjects to be taught in the schools. Nonetheless, this objective is often proving difficult to attain as enterprises, in particular small and medium sized enterprises, have difficulties to define and clearly express their skills requirements. They simply lack the experience and are uncertain about their future profile and needs.

In continuing vocational training a more comprehensive approach has to be found. To date, efforts for promoting continuing vocational training have focused on the (re)training of the unemployed. In the future, measures to encourage and support the continuing training of the employed will have to be implemented. This has already been recognised in the government document on the "Long-term Development Programme for Vocational Training".

Moreover, a more systematic approach is needed in developing a coherent system including appropriate standards and certification to validate knowledge. At the same time, training and retraining of the labour force must be more strongly linked to development plans, rather than to resort to ad hoc or short term training options.

4.2 Institutional arrangements

One of the major challenges for the success of reforms of the vocational training contents concerns the capability of schools to implement new concepts, structures and curricula. They need appropriate infrastructures in terms of material and staff. Many schools, in particular those in remote or disadvantaged areas, may not be able to implement the reforms properly, and teachers may not be sufficiently trained to work with the new tools.

In order to face the upcoming changes, local governments are rationalising and merging schools to maximise their current capacities. Nevertheless, adequate technical and, occasionally, financial support for these schools still needs to be ensured .

A further major challenge concerns the role of social partners in the decision making process for vocational education and training at national and regional levels. Although the involvement of social partners in the process is ensured through their participation in advisory bodies (see above), they often cannot fully exercise their duties (or rights) as their expertise in vocational education and training related issues is limited.

At this stage they need help to improve their awareness, knowledge and analytical capabilities on vocational training. Moreover, financial support is required (especially for trade unions which have limited funds) to improve their infrastructure for analysing vocational training.

A coherent and efficient system has to be developed for vocational guidance and counselling for both young people and the unemployed, or employed who are in danger of unemployment due to industrial restructuring. Until now there are no specific ideas on the form that this system should take, nor is there the specialised personnel to provide guidance (regardless of the structure for performing these services).

4.3 Qualifications and training methods

The continuous updating of the National Vocational Qualifications Register is considered one of the main instruments for the continuous modernisation of the contents of training. This updating has already started but it covers only one third of the total number of occupations included in the register..

Furthermore, the high number of occupations included in the Register (approx. 900) means that they are excessively specialised and do not, therefore, comply with the prevailing concept of broad training. Thus, the register needs pruning. In view of Hungary's possible accession to the European Union, the standards applied in the EU Member States should be understood before the professional and examination standards are updated.

Post-secondary level qualifications have to be defined which are relevant to the labour market, and then to be translated into professional standards and curricula for setting up post-secondary programmes within the framework of "Accredited Higher Vocational Training".

5. POSSIBLE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE

The following areas need assistance:

- **Development of a system for identifying skills shortages in the labour market and monitoring the vocational training system.**

  Hungary collects a lot of statistical information on both these areas but in a piecemeal and poorly co-ordinated way so that it is difficult to use in decision making. Support should focus on developing a mechanism collating all the labour market and the training system information available and disseminating it to decision makers (including training institutions, central and local authorities with responsibility for training, and beneficiaries).

- **Consolidating the involvement of social partners in vocational education and training.**

  Support should aim at raising the awareness and expertise of social partners. This could be achieved by bringing together trade unions and employers associations from Hungary and those in EU Member States and other countries. Moreover, in view of the limited financial resources of trade unions, financial support will be needed to strengthen their infrastructure so that they can analyse relevant issues.

- **Development of a vocational guidance system.**

  Support should be made available for designing and implementing a coherent system for vocational guidance.

- **Development of training standards similar to those in EU countries and the mutual recognition of qualifications.**

  In view of Hungary's accession to the EU, training standards for specific occupations should be developed along the lines of EU Member States. Hungary has already started working with Austria and Germany. Support should aim at encouraging further bilateral co-operation.

- **Development of post-secondary training.**

  Support should particularly focus on the development of "Accredited Higher Vocational Training" and should aim to:

  - develop a credit and certification system to ensure the recognition of these training cycles (or parts of them) in higher education institutions;
  - analyse labour market for identifying training sectors which require these types of qualification and the development of training profiles;
  - develop relevant curricula;
  - develop teacher training to respond to the needs of this new training form.

1. **Key Indicators**
2. **Diagram of the vocational education and training system**
3. **Legislative Framework**
4. **Responsible bodies**
5. **Phare vocational education and training programmes**

ANNEX 1

Key Indicators[1]

Indicators	1994			1995		
A. Access and Participation						
1. Participation in education and training of 16 year olds of which in vocational education and training	82.3% 71.8%			83% 71.4%		
2. Participation in education and training of 18 year olds of which in vocational education and training	26.2% 80.8%			32.1% 82.5%		
3. Relative importance of vocational education and training in secondary education (in terms of enrolment) Total Males Females	73.1% 79.8% 66.5%			73% 79.6% 66.3%		
4. Educational attainment of the population (25-59 years old)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7
Total Males Females				34.3% 29.1% 39.3%	51.6% 56.7% 46.6%	14.2% 14.2% 14.1%
(25-30 years old) Total Males Females	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21.1% 20.4% 21.9%	65.1% 67.7% 32.4%	13.7% 11.8% 15.7%
B. Finance						
5. Public Expenditure on Education as percentage of GDP	6.4%			5.6%		
6. Public Expenditure on vocational education and training as percentage of GDP	0.75%			1%		
C. Labour Market Trends						
7. Number of employed	3.751.500			3.678.800		
8. Unemployment rates Total Younger than 25 Older than 25	10.1% 17.1% 8.8%			9.4% 16.1% 8.2%		
9. Unemployment rates by educational attainment of the population (25-59 years old)				ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7
Total Males Females	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7.5% 10.2% 5.5%	11% 13.2% 8.5%	3.2% 3.3% 3%

*est.

1. Data provided by National Observatory.

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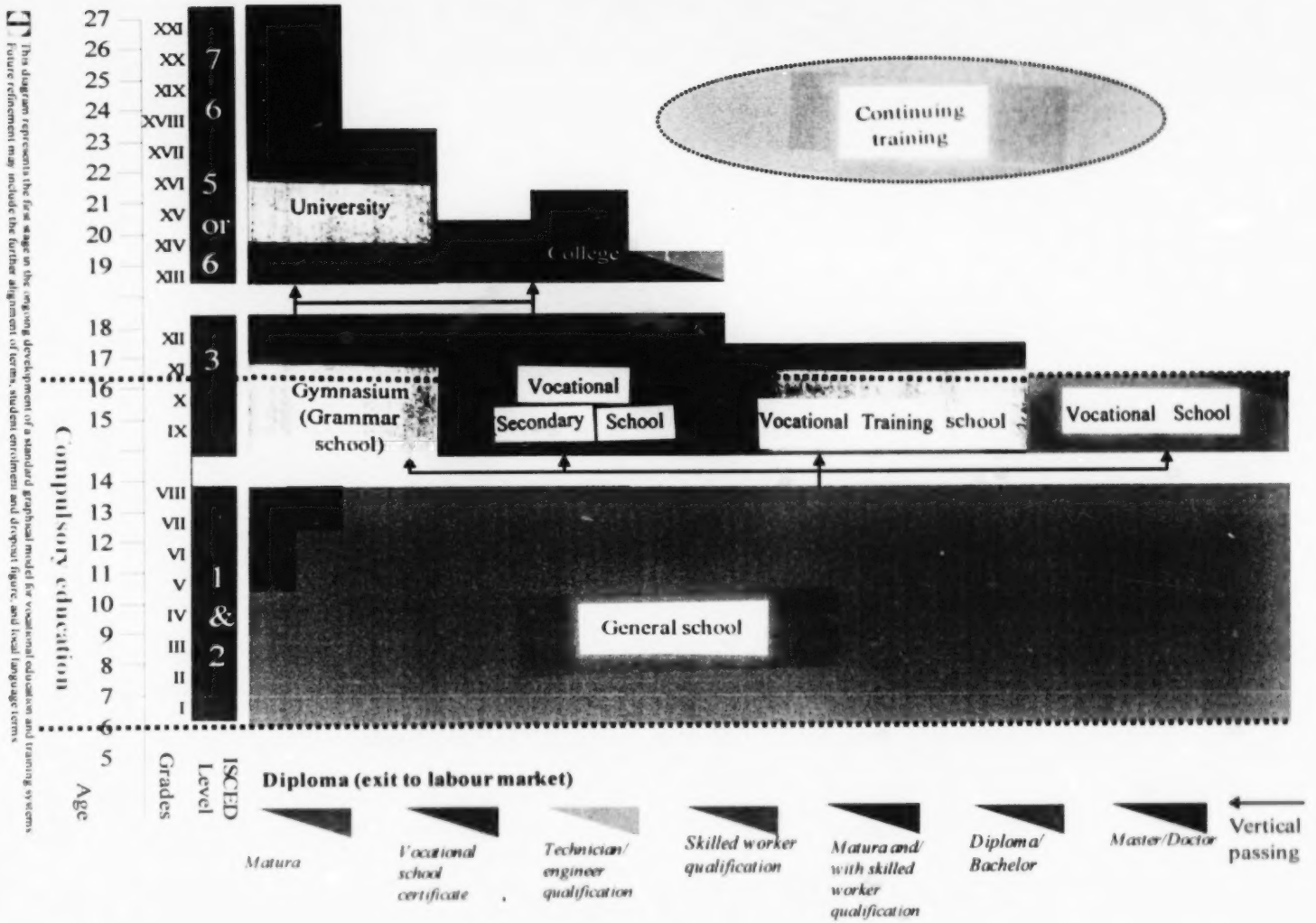
ANNEX 2

Diagram of the vocational education and training system



This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figures, and local language terms.

ANNEX 3

Legislative Framework

The following are the main legal provisions for education and training introduced during the current transition process:

- the 1985 Law on Education, amended in 1990 with significant changes in both the content and structure
- Law XXIII/1988 on the Vocational Training Fund and Vocational Training contribution, establishing the fund (see Annex 3 for further details)
- Law IV/1991 on Employment Promotion and the Unemployed including provision for the creation of the National Training Council, a tripartite policy and funding body set up to develop proposals for establishing and co-ordinating training centres
- New Labour Code codifying the basic principles of the European Social Charter including the right to vocational training
- Law LXXVI/1993 on Vocational Training providing a National Qualification List (NQL) together with measures for ensuring the output control of vocational training through standard-based professional qualifications
- Law LXXIX/1993 on Public Education; this Law establishes the National Core Curriculum for schools and for the reform of the érettségi examination
- Law XVI/1994 on the Chambers of Economy introducing a new system for the supervision of vocational training
- Law LXXXV/1995 on temporary rules related to the organisation and control of state education
- Amendment of the Vocational Training Law/1995; establishing the National Vocational Training Council (see Annex 3) and giving the Chambers of Economy (see Annex 3) the right to submit proposals for professions to be recognised by the state and advise on qualification requirements
- Amendment of the Law on Higher Education/1996 giving higher education institutions the possibility to offer post-secondary accredited higher vocational education
- Amendment of the Law on the Vocational Training Fund/1996 making new provisions for the functioning of the Fund.

ANNEX 4

Responsible bodies

The overall responsibility lies with the **Ministry of Labour**. This includes:

- preparation of legislation (laws, orders, directives) for the functioning of the vocational training system;
- issuing and annually updating the National Qualification List;
- supervision of the teaching of vocational subjects in secondary vocational schools;
- approval and provision of manuals and teaching tools for vocational subjects;
- definition of examination requirements; and,
- appointment of the chairmen of vocational examination boards

The **Ministry of Culture and Education** has responsibility for supervising the teaching of general secondary vocational subjects. The Ministry is responsible for state education, although it shares this responsibility with other Ministries in the case of vocational training within mainstream school-based education.

Sectoral Ministries have the responsibility for the defining content and requirements of the vocational training fields in their competence.

The **Ministry of Internal Affairs** is responsible for the state support of education and school-based vocational training. This ministry allocates the share of the state budget for education and training for specific vocational qualifications to local governments which maintain the schools.

Local authorities and municipalities maintain the schools. They make decisions on the modernisation, reconstruction, financing, merging, closing down and founding of schools. They appoint the heads of school, approve curricula, pedagogical programmes and evaluate the efficiency of the schools.

The National Vocational Training Council (NVTC) is a new institution established on the basis of the Amendment of the Law on Vocational Training in October 1995. It is a consulting body to the Minister of Labour on which employers, employees, Chambers of Economy, school owners and managers, and the ministries responsible for vocational training are represented. The members of the Council are appointed for three years by the Minister of Labour. Its tasks are to:

- draft resolutions on vocational training;
- review the list of vocational qualifications and present proposals for the addition of new qualifications to the National Vocational Qualifications Register;

- report on labour developments and training centres and make proposals on their operation and establishment;
- give opinions on vocational training development issues;
- provide financial support for the development of training materials, qualification requirements and new didactic methods; and,
- assist and support vocational training services.

The **National Training Council** is a tripartite (employers, employees, government) body for national vocational training policy-making. The NTC was established by the Employment Law in 1991, and its powers were increased by the amendment of the Vocational Training Law in 1993. It conceives/develops vocational training policies and exercises considerable influence on the adaptation of technical and vocational training to the labour market. The future and role of this Council is uncertain now that the National Vocational Training Council has been established (see above).

The three **Chambers of Economy** (Commerce and Industry, Agriculture, and Crafts) and the **Hungarian Employers' Association** were established at the end of 1994 with regional branches in all counties. They are important promoters of government policy in strengthening the relationship between the labour market and vocational training. They supervise and record practical demand for on-the-job training, conclude contracts with trainees and represent the interests of a given trade or profession at examinations. The Chambers of Economy are not as yet fully operational as a result of their weak infrastructure. At the moment many of their tasks continue to be carried out by the Ministry of Labour although a gradual hand-over is envisaged.

The **National Vocational Institute for Vocational Education (NIVE)** supports the work of the Ministry of Labour by developing methodology and the content of curricula for initial and continuing vocational training. It also provides further training for vocational teachers and supports innovative work on training at local level.

The **National Labour Centre** provides guidance and support to vocational schools through its network of **County Labour Centres** (tripartite bodies).

Regional Training Centres provide intensive, flexible, learner-centred re-training courses for adults at the request of the counties, local government or local enterprises. They also provide guidance and other advisory and support services particularly focused on small businesses.

Secondary and apprenticeship vocational schools provide training programmes mainly in the framework of the mainstream education system at secondary (and occasionally post-secondary) level. These schools have enjoyed greater independence since the 1985 Law on Education.

Universities and colleges organise post-secondary accredited higher vocational training programmes. Many of them subcontract secondary vocational schools, because the latter have the necessary prerequisites for practical training (e.g. workshops and trainers' experience)

Private training organisations and enterprises also provide training. Since 1993 the Vocational Training Fund has been subsidising enterprises which conduct vocational training as their main activity.

ANNEX 5

International Assistance

Phare vocational education and training programmes

Development and reform of vocational education: 1990-93 (completed), Budget 1.5 MECU

Three activities were supported under this programme:

- development of an information centre,
- study visits abroad for vocational teachers, translators and management
- the establishment of two language training centres.

Employment and social development: 1992-96 (on-going), Budget: 20 MECU

Two components in this programme related to vocational training:

A total of 10 MECU was allocated to the first component called "Budapest Labour Market Intervention Programme" for the:

- restructuring of apprenticeships,
- promotion of active employment measures,
- extension of the on-going secondary vocational training project,
- improvement of continuing training standards,
- establishment of a Human Resource Development Facility.

The second component of the programme dealt with youth education and training. A total of 7.6 MECU was allocated to support curricula reform in 21 secondary vocational schools (one per county) and provide training in specific sectors such as economy/office and catering. These schools joined the network of pilot schools set up by the World Bank (see Annex 5). This component also included support for apprenticeship schools and disadvantaged youth.

Strengthening links between education and economy: 1994/97 (on-going), Budget: 8 MECU

This programme draws on the experience of university-enterprise co-operation in the European Union. Its main components are:

- cooperation between higher education institutions and industry through joint projects and other activities,
- diversification of initial higher education through the creation of post-secondary vocational education and training,
- development of distance education,
- training for young people without secondary level qualifications.

In addition to these programmes directly linked to vocational education and training, Phare has provided significant input in specific sectors. These include:

Agricultural and land registration programme: until end 97 (on-going), Budget 10 MECU

A total of 500,000 ECU has been allocated to agricultural training. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for 165 vocational training institutes, which are the main beneficiaries of this programme. Emphasis is put on developing practical training, and updating the demonstration and model farms linked to the training institutes. The following activities are funded:

- ensuring the equivalence of diplomas and degrees,
- developing high and medium level curricula in economic and market oriented farming methods,
- providing equipment for training and farm workshops,
- reviewing the links between research and education.

Energy and environment: 1994-96 (on-going), Budget 15.5 MECU.

This programme includes a training component aiming at improving environmental education, developing graduate and post-graduate programmes in association with universities in the EU and developing distance learning courses.

Support for the restructuring of the health system: 1993-96 (on-going), Budget 10 MECU

This programme includes a major training component in the field of primary health care. It concerns the establishment of 10 regional resource and training centres, and the development of programmes to train the trainers of general practitioners and nurses. 300 general practitioners will be trained abroad.

Public administration reform and training: 1992-95 (completed), Budget 5 MECU.

This programme included a major 1.8 MECU component for civil service management and training. The target groups were:

- the staff of the public administration department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs,
- the staff of the Training Centre for Public Administration in the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration,
- selected local government staff to form a core of specialists in training needs analysis and course design,
- civil servants involved in financial management and public procurement, and a core group of trainers who could continue the training in the future.

In the area of *Management Training* Phare has implemented a wide range of activities in Hungary since 1992. These include :

- training of approx. 500 senior managers from restructured state-owned enterprises through practical training focusing on the effects of a market economy on the strategy, marketing and finances of each of the participating enterprises (Budget: 1.4 MECU). Support ended in 1994.
- training of approx. 1000 middle managers (from Hungarian-owned enterprises of between 100 and 1000 employees) in a practical training programme focusing on skills development and the implementation of change within enterprises (Budget: 2.7 MECU). Support continues until the end of 1997.
- training on bankruptcy management. (Budget: 270,000 ECU). This project has been completed.
- high level training on finance, accounting and legal issues for newly appointed chairmen of boards of directors and of supervisory boards of state-owned enterprises.

Other International Assistance in the area of vocational education and training

1. World Bank

Hungary and the World Bank agreed on a "Human Resource" development loan for the years 1991 to 94 for a total of 150 million US$. This loan included resources for training both the young (36 million US$) and adults (25 million US$). In supporting youth training, the World Bank helped in the development of secondary vocational school models and in the definition of curricula for 13 occupational areas. This work was performed in cooperation with a network of 61 vocational schools from various sectors such as agriculture or food. The loan also supported higher education and training in foreign languages. With regard to adult training, the World Bank helped to establish and equip nine adult re-training centres, develop curricula, training methods and guidance for individual career changes. A specific evaluation of the adult training component was carried out in Autumn 1995. The World Bank has recognised that the development of a mechanism to ensure the adaptation of training needs to labour market requirements would be a major improvement for Hungary and it strongly supports the idea of promoting Phare involvement in this area.

2. Bilateral activities

There are a number of bilateral programmes operating in Hungary, involving Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, France and the United Kingdom in particular.

- Activities receiving Dutch support include management training, language training, and the development of a standardised examination system for secondary education. Further activities will concentrate on teacher training, and integration into the European Union. Cooperation also exists in the framework of the Phare multi-country Staff Development Programme and in the field of post-secondary education where the Netherlands has offered assistance in the sector of hotel and tourism management.

- Activities with the UK Know How Fund focus on open learning resources.
- France established bilateral relations with Hungary in the field of education and training a long time ago. At present, Hungary receives French assistance for the "Bilan des compétences", customisation of training, competence transfer, the mobility of workers, and quality control in training, etc. In addition, study visits to French regional observatories dealing with employment and training have been requested. France, as a result of its experience in establishing "Instituts Universitaires de Technologie" (IUT), is able to provide support for the development of the new Hungarian post-secondary training system.
- German assistance is mainly provided in:
  - training for disadvantaged youth,
  - occupational standards,
  - examination requirements,
  - social dialogue, development of curricula,
  - vocational guidance and counselling.

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